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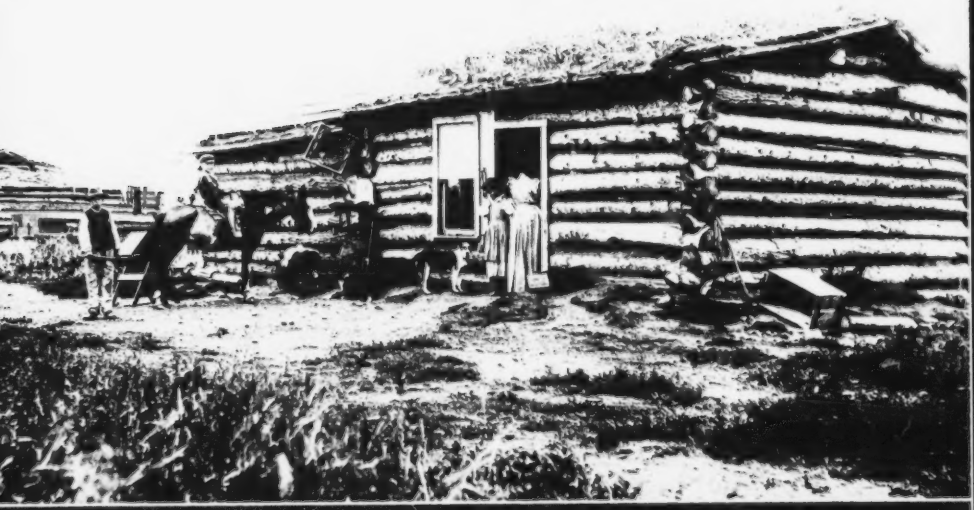


Alberta Centennial
Century Farm & Ranch Award

Celebrate our past. Imagine our future.

Alberta 2005 Alberta Centennial

Message from the Minister

Farming and ranching consists of hard work and sacrifice, combined with a healthy dose of energy and unrelenting faith. This spirit, complemented by the prospect of new land of limitless natural resources, is what brought the first farming families to Alberta.

Keeping the farm or ranch from generation-to-generation is an impressive achievement for any Alberta family. The Government of Alberta wishes to recognize these special families who built the foundation of Alberta's farming and ranching industry.

The Alberta Century Farm & Ranch Award salutes those families who have owned and operated the same land for 100 years or more.

Congratulations to those families who are eligible in 2005. Each family will receive a bronze plaque with the Centennial Logo of the province, commemorating this 100-year achievement. The award symbolizes each family's perseverance and ability to keep farming or ranching in the face of change.

The Century Farm & Ranch Award also reflects the Government of Alberta's confidence in the modern farm-and-ranch family's ability to continue overcoming constant challenges to remain on the land. The Government of Alberta salutes the enduring contribution farm and ranch families make to Alberta's ongoing economic success.

Above all else, the award represents the hard work and desire to carry on what was 100 years ago a dream, then a reality, and now a proud family tradition.

Doug Horner

Doug Horner
Minister
Alberta Agriculture, Food and
Rural Development

Welcome to the 2005 Harvest Gala

Alberta has had a glorious past 100 years of agriculture. We have progressed well beyond anything our first homesteaders could ever have dreamed of. As spectacular as our history is, our future holds even more promise, more development and more innovation than we can imagine today.

Why? Because of the spirit and will of our producers and processors. People who are not content with the way things have always been done. People who will invest their time, their money and their ingenuity, and take risks in ways not thought of today. They will make agriculture not just an industry in Alberta, but the most successful agriculture industry in the world.

As wonderful and as exciting as our past has been, hold on, our future will take your breath away.

Alberta's Early Agricultural History

A fur trader named Peter Pond was the first white man to cultivate soil in what is now Alberta. He established an isolated post near Lake Athabasca and in 1779, was raising vegetables in his small garden. In 1857, explorer Captain John Palliser travelled the southern Prairies and pronounced the land and climate unsuitable for agriculture. This did not deter the settlers, who began to move into the area and prove him wrong.

It was more than 100 years between Peter Pond's first garden and any large-scale attempts at agriculture in the Northwest Territories. The Northwest Territories included a tract of land that later became Alberta. Ranchers moved into the southern areas between 1874 and 1880, mainly from similar country south of the American border. They found abundant grasses and water, and a climate moderated by occasional Chinook winds in the winter.

The Northwest Mounted Police helped to ensure the area grew by establishing Fort Macleod in 1874.

To prepare for the allotment of unbroken land to homesteaders, surveyors had been working since 1871 on the mammoth task of dividing the Prairies into a grid system of townships, sections and quarter sections.

People came to Canada by ship from around the world. For many, the second part of their journey was to head West.

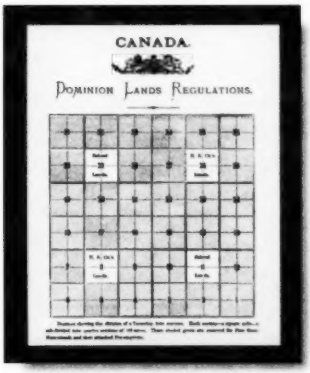
Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Surveying Land in Alberta

All rural land in Western Canada has legal descriptions from a survey system that was established by the Dominion Lands Act in 1872. It divided the map of Western Canada into six vertical strips marked by meridians. Alberta lands are marked by the Fourth (Saskatchewan/Alberta border), Fifth (running through Calgary/Stony Plain) and Sixth meridians (Peace River Country).

A township is six miles square, divided into 36 sections each of 640 acres. Each section is divided into four quarter sections of 160 acres. The sections are numbered sequentially from the southeast quarter, in a back-and-forth pattern, to the northeast corner.

Only 16 full sections of the 36 available in most townships were given over immediately to homesteaders. The remaining sections were used as follows:



- sections 11 and 29 of every township were reserved as school lands
- all other odd-numbered sections were reserved for selection as railway grants
- the Hudson's Bay Company received section 8 and three quarters from section 26 (the northeast quarter was available to homesteaders)
- the Hudson's Bay Company also received all of section 26 in every fifth township

Surveying crews used a grid system to mark out the province. This grid system allowed for the allotment of homesteads and other parcels of land.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Homesteading in Alberta

"Homesteading" was a very specific method of acquiring land.

The process began with "entry", which was a term used to refer to the filing in a Dominion Lands office of a claim to a particular parcel of land. Approved copies of survey plans were kept in the lands office, and entry enabled a record to be kept of the occupied lands in each township. It also prevented settlement on areas allocated as Hudson Bay Company or school lands.

Individuals could apply for parcels of Crown land in Western Canada by paying a $10 filing fee. The normal size of a homestead was one-quarter section of 160 acres.

Upon taking up the homestead, it was mandatory that the individual fulfil four requirements during a qualifying period:

- clear at least 10 acres of land
- undertake some cultivation
- built a habitable dwelling and some farm buildings
- live on the land for six months a year

Homesteaders were originally given a five-year qualifying period to complete their improvements. This was later reduced to three years. On proving that all the above requirements were fulfilled, the government issued letters patent (title) to the land. With this the homesteader took ownership of the land, completing the homesteading process.

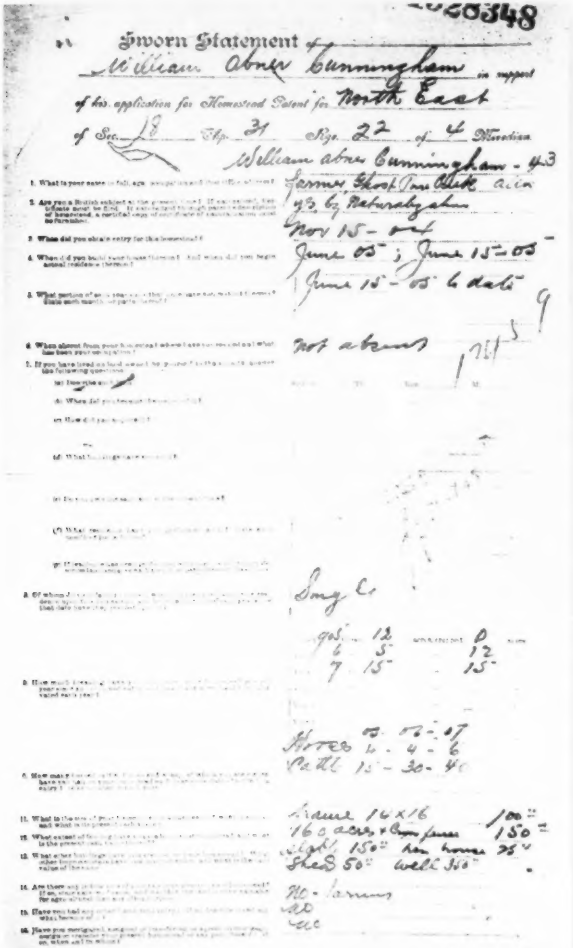
The Dominion Lands Agency had offices in each land district. The first agency offices in Alberta were in Edmonton and Calgary. The province was divided in half at Innisfail and the Edmonton office was responsible for land north of township 34. New offices opened as settlement increased and certain areas became more active. The new offices took over responsibility for tracts of land from older agencies.

The agency created and maintained files to document the status of each parcel of land, not to track homesteaders. When each quarter section was homesteaded for the first time, it received a file number. All documents relating to that quarter were placed on file until the land was patented.

Original homestead records include basic biographical information on the applicant, such as his or her age, place of birth, former place of residence and date of entry on the land. Marital status is noted, but the spouse is not usually named. If the applicant was not a Canadian citizen, there may be a copy of his/her naturalization record, as only Canadian citizens could receive title to a homestead.

In 1930, control of natural resources was transferred to the western provinces. Records of active transactions (files for land which had not already been patented) were turned over to the provincial governments, or in Alberta's case, to the Department of Lands and Mines.

Homesteads continued to be available in Alberta until the 1970s, mostly in the northern and Peace River areas.



Sworn Statement of
William Abner Cunningham in support
of his application for Homestead Patent for North East
of Sec. 18 Twp. 31 Rge. 22 of 4 Meridian

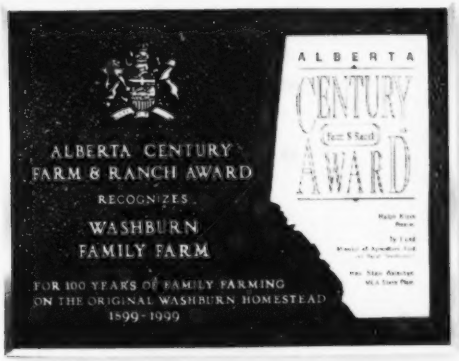
William abner Cunningham - 4-3
Farmer Stock Dealer Clerk acct
4-3 by Naturalization
Nov 15 - 04
June 05 ; June 15-05
June 15 - 05 6 days
not absent
Smy Co
905 - 12
6 5
7 15
Notes 5. 5-17
Patt 15 - 30 - 40
Frame 16x16
160 acres + Com fence
Stable 150 Ice house 75
Shed 50 Well 350
No - farming
do
do

A sample of one page of a homestead application form.

Alberta Century Farm & Ranch Award Plaques

Since the Alberta Century Farm & Ranch Award program began in 1993, each qualifying family has received a bronze plaque commemorating this 100-year milestone. This plaque symbolizes the family's perseverance and their ability to keep farming or ranching in the face of change.

This year, as the province celebrates its centennial, a special edition of the Alberta Century Farm & Ranch Award plaque is being awarded to those farm families who are celebrating their 100th anniversary along with the province.

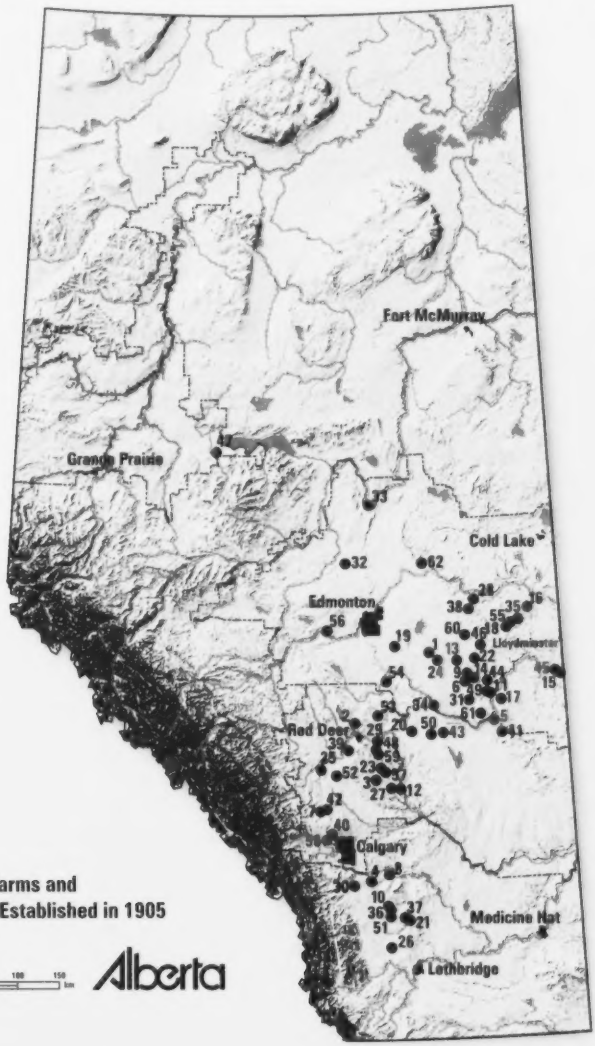


Alberta Century Farm & Ranch Award plaque.

Special centennial edition Alberta Century Farm & Ranch Award plaque.

Farms and Ranches Established in 1905

This map shows the location of 62 Alberta farms and ranches that were established in 1905. The numbers on the map also correspond to the biographies contained in this booklet. Although applications for the centennial version of the Alberta Century Farm & Ranch Award will be accepted until December 31, 2005, the families recognized in this booklet applied prior to a May 31st deadline.



Family Biographies

The Alberta Government congratulates the following families who exemplify a love of the land and a passion for both their families and agriculture. Their determination to homestead in Alberta solidified a future for agriculture in this province, and this province in Canada.

Anderson Family, Ryley ❶

After arriving in Alberta from North Dakota, 18-year-old Ernest Anderson and his two older brothers, Gust and John, took out homestead land in the same section, 8.5 miles southwest of Ryley. Ernest lived with his brother Gust's family, which included five children. Ernest's son, Robert, says that during a rainy period his father took his shotgun, coffee pot and bedroll, and rode his saddle horse 50 miles to the closest lumber yard in Wetaskiwin to get shingles to keep the family's roof from leaking. At the time Robert's mother (who also came from the Dakotas) was working at the Driard Hotel in Wetaskiwin. Robert says his parents never told him if, along with the shingles, his father also brought home a new bride. Today, son Robert and his family operate a mixed farm with commercial beef, wheat, barley, oats, canola, rye, hay and native/seeded pastureland.

Atsinger Family, Blackfalds ❷

The Atsingers originated from Michigan and homesteaded near Blackfalds. John Atsinger was married with a family when he arrived in 1898. He, his wife, and six children settled on the land that John owned and started ranching with 26 cows, five horses and five hogs. On February 24, 1905, he applied for a homestead that was close to the land he already owned in order to expand his farm. The land he bought in 1914 was very wet, and included a surveyed but unnamed lake. By 1920, 55 acres were cultivated land. Today, it has increased to 140 cultivated acres and is part of the grain operation farmed by John's grandson, Ken.

Located near Calgary, this is the M. Cunningham ranch in the 1880s.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Bauer Family, Torrington ❸

Phillip Bauer was 29 years old when he arrived on Canadian soil. His family had immigrated to the United States from Russia. After working in both Denver and Portland, he decided to head north to apply for a homestead. On October 18, 1905, he obtained his homestead entry and on March 23, 1909, he officially received the patent after completing all the homestead requirements. During Phillip's day, the farm concentrated on grain and livestock. However, Phillip's descendants (son, Art, and grandson, Brad) focus on growing grain, running what they describe as a 'high-tech, innovative, efficient and clean' operation.

Bird Family, Blackie ❹

R.P. Bird was 16 when he left England in 1902 with his older brother. After arriving in Calgary via direct train from Halifax, they began working on local farms. R.P. found his homestead near Blackie in 1905, and continued buying land until 1942. Always a horseman, R.P. bought, broke and sold many horses. He never drove a car, even while he was a Dinton Municipal District councillor. His 12-and-14-year-old sons would drive him around. In 1942, at the age of 56, R.P. and his wife, Violet, moved to a ranch in the Bearberry district, northwest of Sundre. Their son Ronald Alexander Bird took over the mixed farm. Today, grandson, Michael, runs a mixed operation, farming 1,800 acres of canola, wheat, barley, peas and feed grains. He also pastures cattle on a grazing reserve and backgrounds calves.

Black Family, Brownfield ❺

Five generations of the Black family have lived in the Brownfield area, along the Battle River Valley. Henry (Harry) Noel Black's family were from England, but moved to Ontario before the turn of the century. In 1905, 20-year-old Harry made the trip out west to homestead a quarter for Harry and his father, William. Harry put up a sod house that homesteading year of 1905, and then went back to Ontario to propose to Mabel Booth. Harry returned with William in 1906 to begin ranching operations. They had planned to return to Ontario that winter, but the snowy and cold weather prevented the trip. On the coldest day that winter, the thermometer registered -76°F. In the spring of 1907, Mabel came out from Ontario. She and Harry were married in Stettler, raised 13 children and were active in their community. Their son, Reginald, and his wife, Doris, currently own the land and their son, Ken, now raises cattle and farms it.

Between 1901 and 1905, 40,000 homesteads were granted.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

These homesteaders lived in a tent until they were able to build a home.

Brodie Family, Killam 6

Five generations of the White-Brodie family have lived in the original Eaton's home built by William and Elizabeth White in 1917. William and Elizabeth came to Canada after getting married in Great Britain in 1904, and worked their way across the country to homestead in Alberta. The land they chose was four miles north of Killam, where they signed the original homestead agreement on September 19, 1905. William and Elizabeth worked away from the farm until June 14, 1906, in order to earn enough money to prove the land. Within that same year, they broke five acres, built a shack to live in, and owned three cows and three horses. By 1909, they had increased the herd to 13 cows and six horses, and had 17 acres cleared. They passed the farm to their daughter, Gertrude, who married Gordon Brodie. William's grandson, Lorne, and great-grandson, Randy, now farm together and raise cattle.

Buckler Family, Cochrane 7

David Butler came from Michigan by train after being persuaded to come to Alberta by his brother, Albion. In 1905, 28-year-old David arrived in Alberta with another brother, Oliver, to homestead adjacent quarters. David and wife Lillie's homestead near Cochrane was a mixed operation. He also had a blacksmith and machinery shop on his homestead for his own use. He was involved in breaking and training horses, which led him to organize rodeo gatherings with other cowboys and ranchers at Bottrel. These rodeos grew into today's annual July Dogpound Stampede. Being very community-minded, David even canvassed neighbours to get the railway and elevators installed at Madden, Dogpound and Cremona. Having these services in place shortened the great distances horse-drawn wagons had to travel when hauling grain. After David passed away in 1962, his son, Henry, helped Lill[illegible] run the farm. He eventually bought it in about 1975. Henry passed away in 20[illegible]. Currently, Henry's wife, Ellen, and her three sons run the farm.

Campbell Family, Mossleigh 8

Ernest Campbell was 27 and single when he left Quebec for Mossleigh in May 1905. His mixed farm started with only one horse and two cows. During the first three years, Ernest spent six months each summer improving his own homestead, and the winters working for his neighbour on the adjoining section. The land was passed down to his son, William, and then to his grandson, John. The farm grew to 320 acres.

Child Family, Killam 9

Sidney Child and his family were originally stonemasons from England. They came by ship to Quebec City, by train to Wetaskiwin, and then by wagon to homestead near Killam in 1904. Sidney was only 17 at the time, and had to wait until he was 18, in 1905, to officially apply for his homestead land. He homesteaded a quarter from the same section as his father and brothers. It was located in the County of Flagstaff, near Killam. In the early days, the Child operation was a mixed farm, with dairy cows, chickens, pigs, horses and range cattle. In 1957, Sidney's son, Albert, changed the farm focus to grain farming. Today, grandson Rick and his family have expanded the farm to nine quarters. It has been said that Sydney, his father and his brothers took winter jobs at a quarry near Calgary, and worked on stonework that was eventually used on the Provincial Legislature of Alberta.

Immigrants helped build Alberta. These immigrants are shown at a train station.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

In the early 1900s, thousands of settlers came to Alberta from around the world. These new immigrants contributed to an increase of over 500 per cent in the province's population.

Clark Family, Vulcan ⑩

Five generations of the Forrester-Clark family have expanded a single homesteaded quarter to 12 quarters over the last 100 years. Stephen Forrester was a china packer and Joyce Howell was a china painter when they were married at Stoke-on-Trent in Staffordshire, England, in 1892. Stephen came to Canada in 1904, and worked in the coal mines at Fernie, British Columbia. Once his wife and his two children arrived, the family travelled to Nanton by rail, and then by horse and wagon to their homestead southwest of Vulcan. They arrived there on July 15, 1905. The family endured many hardships, including losing their prized Wedgewood dinner set. It broke when the wagon carrying it overturned crossing the Little Bow River. Stephen was inexperienced with handling livestock and made a habit of tying the lead line of his horse around his waist. On more than one occasion, gusts of wind made his slicker flap noisily, causing the horse to bolt and drag Stephen along behind! Following Stephen, his daughter, Annie Alice, and her husband, Myron Ross Clark, farmed the land. Their son, Leslie Myron, and their grandson, David, followed in succession. Today, Myron and Annie Alice's great-grandson, Michael, continues to farm the same land. He grows canola, barley and hard spring wheat.

Creasy Family, Hardisty ⑪

Ernest Creasy was a self-taught farmer who left the crowds of London to experience Alberta's wide-open spaces. He was a bookkeeper and accountant by trade, but was also a skilled blacksmith and carpenter. To help keep farm costs at bay, he also worked as a timekeeper for the CPR. He took out his homestead quarter in 1905, near the town of Hardisty in the County of Flagstaff, eventually expanding it to a full section. Some land was lost during the depression, but with hard work, and the help of his sons, most of the land was recovered. In the mid-1950s, Ernest's youngest sons, Alan and David, ran the farm. In 1957, Alan took over the farm. Ernest would be proud to hear that his grandson, Douglas, now operates the family farm as the OC Ranch. It has been expanded to a land base of 4,800 acres and 400 head of cattle.

Davies Family, Three Hills ⓬

Raising their children in a home filled with love and laughter, described the life of Arthur and Elma Davies. After paying $30 to travel on the *Bavarian* from Cardiff, Wales, Art arrived in Winnipeg on May 6, 1903, and worked on a farm. Art and a cousin came to Didsbury in November 1904, where Art bought a team, harness and wagon. While working at the livery barn, he drove settlers and supplies to their homesteads. In December 1905, he filed for his own homestead. Art married Elma Brown, whose family travelled by covered wagon throughout the mid-western United States to come to Alberta. Together the two raised six children on their mixed farming operation. In 1976, Art's youngest son, Leonard, inherited the land and he still owns it today. The land has been farmed by Art's oldest son, Donald, his youngest son, Leonard, and his granddaughter and her husband, Gayle and Doug Parker. It is currently farmed by Art's great-grandson, Kevin Parker, who continues to live in the same house where Art and Elma raised their family.

1907 *A new breed of early-maturing wheat, Marquis, was developed to replace the later-maturing Red Fife.*

Dinisyk Family, Viking ⓭

In 1903, Nick Dinisyk moved to Canada from Austria with his parents, Harry and Irene Dinisyk. Nick purchased the original homestead in 1905, in the Bruce/Viking area. The farm has expanded the original mixed farming operation to include purebred Polled Herefords, along with some commercial cattle. The farm has always been passed down from father to son. Nick's grandson, Paul, and his wife, Marilyn, currently operate the farm.

Djos Family, Sedgewick ⓮

Theodore Severson travelled from Oldham, South Dakota, to homestead in Alberta. In 1905, he purchased a quarter of land at Sedgewick from the Hudson's Bay Company for $10 an acre. The farm grew to five quarters and has stayed a mixed farming operation with both commercial cattle and grain. Two acres from the original homestead were donated to start the Wardville School, which was later named the Sunlight School. The family was instrumental in starting the Bethonia Lutheran Church, the first Lutheran church in the district. Church was an important part of Theodore's life as the family donated their time for janitorial duties and often put their last dollar in the collection plate. Theodore left the farm to his daughter Minnie (Severson) Djos. Minnie's son, Edward, is currently farming the original homestead.

Djuff Family, Rivercourse ⓯

In 1901, at the age of 16, Selius Djuff immigrated to Fosston, Minnesota from Saude, Norway. In 1905, he decided to go to Canada with brother Thomas and some friends. They travelled first by train, and then by covered wagon from North Battleford to his homestead in the Dina district, south of Rivercourse. Since there was no supply house between Battleford and Lloydminster, Selius served as cook, baking bread and churning butter. Two more brothers, Torger and Tore, came to Alberta in 1906 and built a log house. In 1921, Selius built a two-storey house, complete with a basement for his new bride, Johanna Masters. She also came from Fosston, Minnesota. They had four children: Sherman, Inez, Stanley and Phyllis. Selius ran the farm as a mixed operation and was one of the first farmers in the district to use fertilizer. The original homestead grew from a single quarter to 12. Sherman, with his wife Elsie and brother Stanley, are still farming it today.

Elliot Family, Dewberry ⓰

The land located at the University of Alberta is where James Elliot first homesteaded. Born in New York, he moved across the United States. James met his wife in Minnesota, and together they travelled by horse and wagon to Alberta. The couple left Edmonton, moved to Redwater, settled in Dewberry and eventually applied for a homestead on July 6, 1905. The Elliot farm was primarily a horse ranch, but it has been expanded to become a 700-head commercial cow-calf operation. The farm passed from James to his son, William. It then passed to another son, Bud. The next owner was a grandson, Jester (Bud's son). Today, James' great-grandson, Clayton, farms the land with his family.

Harvesting on the H. Vizina farm near Horse Hills, Alberta.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Flaade Family, Hardisty ⓱

Nils Flaade and Marie Iverson were only 17 when they left their families in Norway to seek their own heritage in the new world. They arrived in the Port of Boston in 1900, and spent three years working on relatives' farms in the United States before coming to Alberta in 1905. They were married in Wetaskiwin and walked their oxen to their homestead in the Rosyth District near Hardisty. They hand-cleared the land, planted crops and large gardens, cut hay and progressively established a cattle herd while amassing more land. The homestead has been home for many generations thanks to Nils and Marie's foresight and determination to make a better life for their family. The homestead farm was passed on to his son, Bennie, and then to his grandson, Noel, who runs British-based cattle and grows cash and feed crops. He is planning to pass the farm on to his sons, Josh and Cody.

Gordon Family, Mannville ⓲

"Too hilly, sandy and stony to be cultivated," first described the Charles Gordon homestead near Mannville, Alberta. Young and undeterred, Charles chose the property and within five years he had built a house, a barn and a granary, in addition to clearing the bush and having 20 acres of crops. His spirit and determination is evident in his story. He came to Canada in 1904 by ship from Ireland, took the train to Edmonton and walked 140 km (80 miles) to his homestead site at Mannville. Charles married Rose Taylor in 1917, and together they raised five children. To prove his homestead, Charles spent six months of the year on the land. The rest of the year he worked in construction, making extra money on such projects as the Alberta Legislative Buildings and the High Level Bridge. His son, Robert, bought the homestead and grandsons, Daryl and Martin, now farm over 3,000 acres. They employ zero-till methods to manage the land, which is still highly productive after 100 years.

1912 *Legislature Building opened; first Calgary Exhibition and Stampede was held.*

Harke Family, New Sarepta ⓳

August Harke was a child when his family moved to Canada from Poland. They settled in the Strathcona area. At 18, August chose New Sarpeta for his homestead, as land was no longer readily available in the area where he grew up. He raised black Percherons as workhorses, and grew enough feed and straw to maintain a herd of cattle, sheep and hogs. To be fair to the other siblings, his son, Wesley, purchased the farm in 1947. In 1959, Wesley built a dairy barn and bought 20 cows with quota. Wesley's son, Myron, bought the operation in 1987, and continued with the dairy until 2003, when he made a switch to beef, grain and hay.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

A Coaldale Alberta farmer seeds his crop using a horse-drawn seed drill in 1918. In the background is a Canadian Pacific ready-made farm.

Gabriel-Haustein Famiy, Erskine 20

Paul Gabriel was born in Switzerland, but worked on American dairy farms before bringing his family to Alberta by boxcar. The home quarter, located one-mile south of Erskine, was homesteaded in 1905. The three adjoining quarters were purchased from the CPR the following year for $10 an acre. Paul and his three sons raised purebred Herefords. Paul's son, Richard, carried on with the purebreds. He showed them across Canada and sold bulls throughout North America, Scotland and Japan. During the first four decades, the farm grew to 5,000 acres and was divided amongst family or sold off. Today, great-grandson, Doug Haustein, and his sons, Calvert and Conlee, operate a 50-cow dairy, a 120-head cow/calf herd and a 150-head finishing feedlot on 3,000 acres of land. They also grow feed and cash crops. Calvert's son, Bryson, is the sixth generation to live on the farm.

Higgins-Versluys-Norton Family, Champion 21

Henry (Harry) Joseph Higgins was born in 1883 in Newport, Kentucky, and went to school in Lewiston, Montana. He then went to work on Jim Clever's ranch in Fletcher, Washington. While employed there, the ranch was sold. Jim and his family, plus eight cowboys, including Harry, headed out to Canada driving 250 range-bred horses, 90 work and saddle horses, and some range cattle. Harry was 21 when he arrived in Nanton. He applied for a homestead, and also bought an adjoining Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) quarter, located northeast of Champion, for $800, plus $199 in interest. When Harry retired in 1946, his daughter, Rhea, and her husband, Cornelis Versluys, bought the land. The operation consisted of grain, cows and calves, and registered polled Shorthorns. Following Cornelis' death, the HBC quarter was willed to his daughter, Laqueeda (Versluys) Norton. While working as a cowboy, Harry became acquainted with Charlie Russell, a renowned cowboy artist. He gave Harry a sketch that was done by him, which is now kept by a family member.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

This Lloydminister area photo shows the Barr colonists shack, an ox team, plus a horse and cutter in 1900.

Hodgins Family, Viking 22

William Hodgins, wife Laura, and baby daughter Irena, travelled by train from Lucan, Ontario, to the Viking area. In the freight car they brought a team of horses, a plow, two wagons, hand tools and some household items, some of which the family still uses today. When William and Laura homesteaded their parcel of land in 1905, the closest town was then known as Phillips. Laura was the first Caucasian woman to live in the area. Within a year, the family had four cows and three horses and had seeded six acres. They first built a sod house that was later replaced by a log house that cost $400. By the 1930s, in addition to both beef and milk cows, they had a large herd of sheep. However, the land proved more conducive to grain and that is what the family farm grows today. Laura was very community-minded and ran the Lake Thomas Post Office out of her home from 1907 until 1909. In the 1930s, William's son, Hilson, purchased the land and he and his wife raised three children. Today, William's grandson and wife, Warren and Dawn Hodgin, run the family farm.

Hoppins Family, Huxley 23

The lure of the West was what brought Chicago journalist William Henry Hoppins to homestead in Alberta. Originally from Hapsburg, Germany, William was three when his parents immigrated to Covington, Kentucky. He suffered a severe bout of typhoid fever in his early 20s, but survived. He came to Innisfail in 1904, but spent some time working in Banff, because, as William said, "The hard work and expense I was compelled to endure while living on and improving my claim have made me a physical wreck." The original homestead quarter has expanded to include over 6,000 acres of cropland, 450 acres in pasture and a 125-head commercial cattle operation. Today, his grandson, Ken, and great-grandson, Richard, are farming the land, with the fifth generation poised to carry on the Hoppins farming tradition.

Huseby Family, Holden 24

Hans Huseby was born in Valer Moss, Norway, but later moved to Spedeberg after he lost his parents to a flu epidemic when he was seven. In April 1903, he immigrated to Omaha, Nebraska. Eighteen months later, in 1905, he travelled to Wetaskiwin, where he purchased his homestead for $20 in a private sale from an Indian named Laboucane. Over the years Hans and Anna added 16 more quarters of land to their farm. They had a mixed farm (which included a herd of 200 registered and commercial cattle), owned a steam-threshing outfit and ran a trucking operation. Hans was a forward-thinker, speculating on futures in the grain and commodity markets, as well as buying shares in oil, gas and mining resources. He was also an original board member of the Holden Drainage District, on which he served for 50 years. Hans retired in 1947 and passed the farm to his sons, Conrad and Henry. Grandson, Duane, bought the farm in 1967 and is still grain farming today with his son, Wesley.

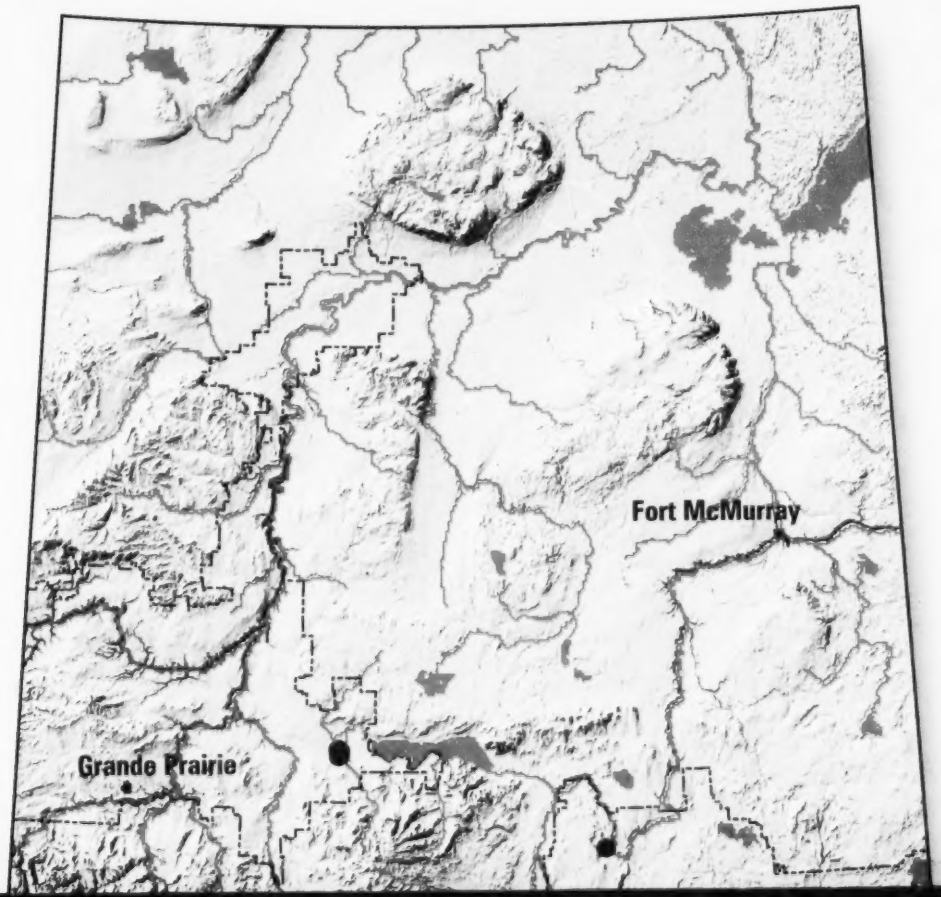
Johnson Family, Sundre 25

In the summer of 1904, Samuel Freeland Johnson, age 44, arrived at Eagle Valley from North Carolina. He filed on a homestead five-miles east, and six-and-one-half miles north of Sundre in February 1905. His wife, Mary, and four young children arrived in Olds by train in April 1905. The land was covered with heavy bush and timber. The first land broken in the area was a 15-acre field that was ploughed up using oxen. After Samuel and Mary passed on, their son, Ira, bought the land and continued farming. In 1953, Ira's son, Roy, bought the property and continues to raise cattle to this day. Roy and his wife had nine children, all of whom graduated from grade 12 with honours.

Medicine Hat was the first village to use natural gas to light its streets and railway platforms, an achievement noted in Ripley's Believe It or Not. **1905**

Jorgenson Family, Granum 26

Jens Jorgenson farmed near Narvik in Norway. In 1903, he went to Idaho, leaving his wife, Joanna, and their six sons behind. A year later, he continued on to Granum, Alberta to visit his sister and to look for land. His sister and brother-in-law, Ellen and Hans Ellison, had Granum's first store in 1902. Jens liked what he saw and took out a homestead in 1905. In 1908, Jens returned to Norway, bringing Joanna and their sons back with him. Wheat was the main crop grown on Jen's Granum farm, along with some barley, canola and mustard. After Jens passed away in 1929, his widow, Johanna, and their sons, Burt and George, farmed until Jen's grandson, Harold, bought the land in 1948. Today, great-grandson, Lloyd, farms 480 acres. A small herd of cattle has been added to the operation.


Fort McMurray
Grande Prairie

From 1881 to 1901, the number of farms in Alberta increased from 285 to 9,479.

Kilgour Family, Three Hills 27

Andrew Kilgour left Scotland to work in Wyoming. After a few years there, Andrew and a friend travelled by saddle horse to the border crossing at Saskatchewan, where officials told them about the good farmland near Kneehill. Andrew homesteaded his quarter near Three Hills. He plowed a fireguard around his original shack, where the native hay had been stacked. Some seed potatoes were placed under the sod without any soil preparation. They grew, producing a rather flat-shaped spud. Meanwhile, during the cold and stormy winter of 1906-1907, Andrew and his friend logged along the Red Deer River while living in a tent. They melted snow in the tent for their team of horses. This produced three inches of hoar frost that made the tent like a comfortable igloo, and helped them survive the brutal winter. Grain farming became the mainstay for the family, but the Kilgour dairy operation also delivered milk to Three Hills for many years. Andrew's wife and children continued farming after his death in 1942. His son, Bill, eventually took over and bought more land. Andrew's grandson, Ian Kilgour, now produces cereal crops for cattle feed and raises cattle.

Kupchenko Family, Two Hills 28

Four generations of Kupchenkos have resided in the Two Hills district. Ivan Kupchenko came to Alberta from the Ukraine in 1903. In the fall of 1904, he married Ankelena Basaraba, whose family also came to homestead in Alberta from the Ukraine. Together they raised six children. They expanded their original quarter by purchasing another 160 acres from the Hudson Bay Company for $10 an acre. Ivan was instrumental in building the Luzan School in 1910, and the Luzan Greek Orthodox Church in 1912, which still holds services today. He also served as a school board trustee and church president for many years. Ivan's son, Nick, and his wife, Helen, took over the farm in 1948. Their son, Alan, began farming with them in 1978. Alan and his wife, Christina, have three daughters and farm 2,500 acres of crop, pasture and hay land. They also manage 130 commercial cows.

Lawrence Family, Red Deer 29

George Melvin Lawrence chose his homestead in the County of Red Deer in May 1905. He came alone from Michigan to Ontario, and then west to Alberta by train. The operation expanded to 640 acres, but remains a mixed farm with cattle. George passed the farm on to his son, Clifford, who has since passed it on to his son, Barry. Barry now raises purebred Gelbvieh cattle, selling breeding stock to other cattle producers.

Leisen Family, High River 30

Albert McWilliams originally came west with a harvest excursion from Guelph, Ontario in 1904. He found work in the East Longview district. He applied for a homestead in 1905, raised cattle and purchased more land. Albert's oldest son, Ernest, took over the homestead in 1947 and raised Hereford cattle and Clydesdale horses. Ernest's daughter, Connie, and husband, Keith Leisen, purchased the operation in 1975. Connie's sister, Marilyn, and her husband, Jim Klein, also raise purebred Herefords and own land originally purchased by Albert. Purebred Herefords replaced the original commercial herd in 1975. Cattle production continues to be the mainstay of this family farm operation.

Lewis Family, Killam 31

The Lewis family originally came from Dixie, Washington. In 1905, at the age of 21, Jake Arthur Lewis and his brother, Fred, came up to Canada to visit their brother, Charlie, who lived southeast of Wetaskiwin. They all went land hunting that year, travelling in a triple box wagon pulled by a team of horses. They went to Spring Lake the first night and then on to what is now the Lawn Hill district, where Jake chose a homestead 12 miles south of Killam. He married in 1924, enjoyed the families of his 10 children and lived to 92. One day while moving oats with a team of oxen, Jake decided to snare a gopher with the end of the oxen whip. This was probably not a good idea. When the oxen took off, Jake and the mower landed in the middle of a slough! Jake's sons helped farm the land at various times. Today, Jake's son, Cecil, and Jake's grandson run a mixed farm on it.

Ranching in the foothills in the 1880s. Cowboy and horse in front of log shack.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Homesteaders walked, travelled by ox cart and rode horses. They also used boats to navigate Alberta waterways.

MacDougall Family, Westlock 32

Daniel MacDougall came to Ontario from Alva, Clackmannan, Scotland in 1883 to work in his uncle's wool mill. After the mill closed in 1900, Daniel, his wife, Elizabeth, and their six children went to Salisbury (now Sherwood Park) by train. In June 1905, they chose to farmstead a parcel of land five miles west of Westlock, in the Hazel Bluff area. They loaded all their possessions in a covered wagon for their trip. Each day they tried to camp near water, but had to wash in milk on the one day that they didn't succeed. Their only son, Malcolm, took over the farm after Daniel returned from the war in 1919. Malcolm's only son, John, took over the farm in 1958 and operated it until his death in 2002. John raised Belgian horses, which were his pride and joy. Daniel's great grandson, Jim, now runs a mixed farming operation.

Major Family, Athabasca 33

Cleophas Beautron (who changed the family name to Major) left Ste. Rose, Quebec, in 1898 and headed west to the Klondike. On his way to the Peace Country he stopped in Athabasca, and returned to the Island Lake area after learning the gold rush was over. He encouraged his brothers, Adelard and Paul Major, to venture westward. Adelard arrived in the Grosmont area in September 1905 and took out a homestead. When his family arrived in 1907, Adelard built an 18' x 24' house. Within the year, the home was destroyed by fire. In 1909, he seeded his first crop of oats on the 16 acres he had cleared. It yielded 50 bushels. By 1910, his stock increased to seven horses and seven cows. Of the eight Major children, son Joseph Herve, and his wife, Marion, took over the main farm. They grew grain and had a small fruit operation. Herve passed away on April 11, 1995, but Marion and her children remain active on the farm, where she enjoys her many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Maves Family, Forestburg ㉞

Thirty-year-old William Maves and his wife, Ottilia, came by train from Ontario to Wetaskwin, and then by horse and ox to the Wanda area, now known as Flagstaff. They started on their homestead near Forestburg, Alberta, living in a 255 square-foot log home. That home cost $200 to build back in 1905. It also cost $100 for a farm stable and granary, $250 for fences, $38 for two wells and $20 for a sod building. The family farm started with horses, an ox and a single plow, but expanded to milk cows, chickens, ducks, pigs and breed horses. After William's death in 1960, the farm passed on to his wife, then to his son, Lloyd, in 1970, and then to William's granddaughter, Luella (Maves) Whamond, in 1979. Now a minimum till operation, the farm has grown from 160 acres to over 1,400 with a small feedlot and a commercial cattle herd.

McPhee Family, Vermilion ㉟

David McPhee came to Alberta from Ontario in 1904 by CPR train, and worked for the Ottewell family. He chose Pelican Lake, 12 miles north of Vermilion, as his homestead. The Christmas of 1905 was especially cold. David realized the tent he was living was probably not warm enough when his moustache froze to his blanket. His herd started with four young cattle. In the fall of 1908, he brought 50 ewe lambs, three horses and some implements back to the farm from Ontario. Unfortunately, coyotes killed the sheep. He built a framed Eaton's house in 1915 for his wife and two children, George and Jean. George went to the local agricultural college in order to help his father with the farming. Today, George's sons, Doug and Tom, work together grain farming and raising cattle.

The legislation changed so that individuals who were the head of the family or had turned 18 could apply for a homestead. The age was lowered from the original application age of 21, set in 1871. **1874**

Middleton Family, Vulcan ㊱

Archie and Jean Middleton, along with their six children, came to Nanton from North Dakota in May of 1905. Originally from Middleville, Ontario, Archie and Jean were married in 1890, and settled on dryland farming in the Vulcan area. They lived in Nanton while Archie built their house, which they moved to the homestead 25 miles east of Nanton in 1913. The house was moved in two pieces, using wagons and poles. The largest feat was crossing the Little Bow River. Archie passed the farm on to his son, Robert, who has since passed it on to his son, Blain. The farm has had both cattle and hogs, but is now operated as a grain farm.

Miller and Smith Families, Champion 37

Albert James Miller left his parents and siblings in Illinois to travel to Ritzville, Washington. It was there he joined with other farmers to go to Nanton to file homesteads in the Cleverville district (now known as Champion). The group even hired a locator who charged $5 per quarter section to find them the land. Al took out his homestead on March 25, 1905. In the same year, Al and another bachelor, Harry Higgins, bought another quarter from the Hudson's Bay Company next to Al's homestead. The two built a barn and shack to live in. In the spring of 1906, Al went back to Ritzville to help drive a large herd of wild horses. Even though the group encountered rain and had to ferry horses across flooding rivers, Al claimed that the most trouble they had was having eight women along who couldn't cook a meal over an open fire in less than two hours. Both Al and Harry endured through the hordes of mosquitoes, drought, long winters, and times they both thought the land should be given back to the Indians. They stayed in Alberta, married and had families. Al's daughter, Ivah, and her husband, George Smith, bought the land when they married. Their son, Roger Smith, is still farming the homestead quarter.

The Province of Alberta is named after Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria and wife of the Marquis of Lorne, Canada's Governor General from 1878 to 1883.

Miskiw Family, Two Hills 38

James (Yakim) and Tekla (Tillie) Miskiw bought their homestead five miles south of Two Hills in January 1905. The well-treed parcel had to be cultivated every year in order for them to reside on the land and prove their homestead. James was born in Bilayci, Western Ukraine, in 1863, and he brought Tillie and their four sons by train to Holland, by ship to Halifax and then by train to Strathcona. After spending the winter with friends, the family walked 50 miles to their homestead, where a fifth son was born. James was a carpenter by trade and built a home in 1912 that still stands today. He also helped build the first Plain Lake Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in 1908. The family fought brushfires and survived the 1919 flu epidemic. Despite all the hardships, they survived to build a great family farm, and have over 80 descendants to date. When his parents passed away, son, Paul, took over the farm, followed by grandson, Bill. Currently Bill's wife, Elvera, farms the land.

Munro Family, Innisfail 39

William Munro travelled to what is now Alberta from Anundel, Quebec, in 1904. He bought his original half-section of land and sent for his family. They arrived by train on March 28, 1905. William and his wife, Catherine, were then 58 and 45 respectively, and their family included six sons and two daughters. The children ranged in age from two to 19. The operation has evolved from using steam power and wheel tractors to modern-day equipment, and has been home to all types of livestock, from cattle to sheep. Today, it also includes buffalo. The house was built in 1908, and included plaster walls and water that was piped into the house by gravity flow from the pump house. Both were unusual features for a home back then. When William passed on in 1919, he left the farm to his wife, Catherine. This was an unusual bequest for that generation. The farm was then passed on to William's son, Douglas, and then to his son's wife, Leslie. It was then sold it to a grandson, Hubert, and then to a great-grandson, David Munro.

Norris Family, Cochrane 40

Thomas Henry Norris and his son, Arthur, came to Canada from England in 1903. They settled east of Cochrane in 1905, after spending time in Winnipeg and Vancouver. They homesteaded quarters from the same section and raised heavy horses. Thomas passed away in 1920. Arthur raised three sons and a daughter. In 1926, Arthur and his family switched from heavy horses to dairying. They ran the dairy together until 1950. Arthur's sons, Thomas and Robert, then took over the dairy farm, eventually buying the operation in 1960. The two brothers continued dairying until 1968, when they switched to beef cows. They sold all the cattle in 2003 to semi-retire, but use the land to raise and sell hay for horses. The farm today is now only three miles from the Calgary city limits. Arthur's daughter, Ellen, married into the Buckler family, also a 2005 Award recipient.

Homesteaders used steam driven tractors to break the land.

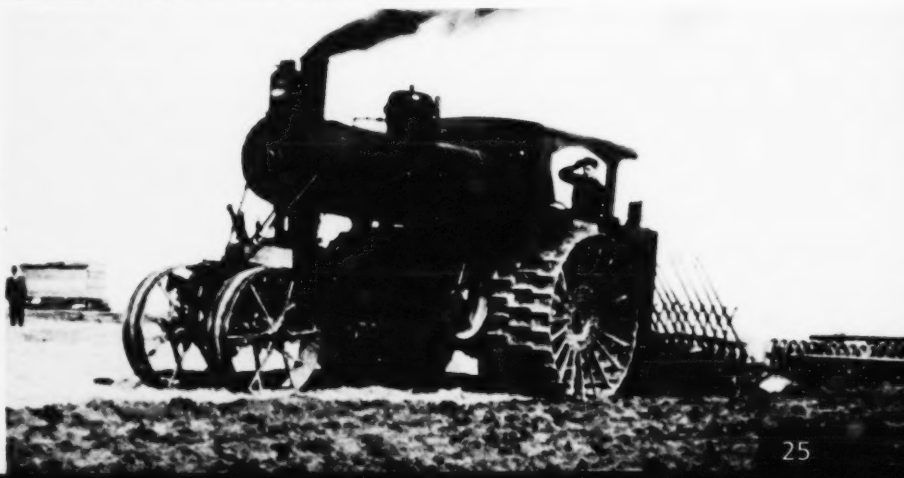


Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

The railway played a key role in getting people to Western Canada. Many people worked for the railway to earn extra money to improve their homesteads.

Preston Family, Coronation 41

On October 20, 1905, Roland W. Preston took out a homestead quarter. It was located 23 miles northwest of Coronation. He had travelled from Winnipeg area by horseback to Alberta with his father, William, and brothers, Thomas and John A. The Preston family originally ran buffalo at Lord Selkirk's farm in the Winnipeg area before making their journey to the new province of Alberta. In 1909, Roland transferred the farm to his wife, Florence. Their son, John W., and grandson, Robert, now farm on the original homestead.

Rach Family, Madden 42

In 1905, Alvin J. Rach's parents lived in the Sampsonton area, now known as Madden. Alvin travelled by train from Idaho to join his parents. He purchased 320 acres of land from the CPR that the family has since expanded to seven quarters. He passed the farm to his son, Edwin. Currently his grandson, Gary, has a cow-calf operation and farms over 1,100 acres. Gary Rach's grandmother, also an American, travelled alone with her five other siblings, aged five to 16 from Texas to Idaho to meet their father. The father then brought his family to his farm in the Sampsonton area.

Ross Family, Gadsby 43

The Ross family had strong ties to the railroad. The family came to Alberta to help build the railroad to Stettler. To get from Omaha, Nebraska to Lacombe, John worked as a foreman and his wife, Hannah, worked as a cook. Even their 12-year-old son, Harry, worked as a railroad waterboy and earned 50 cents a day. They homesteaded near Gadsby, which was Dora and Higgensville at that time. With his father continuing to work on railroads throughout the United States and Canada, Harry began farming at 13, with oxen and a plow. Harry's son, John, and his wife, Jean, as well as grandson, Jack, his wife, Melanie, and their children, are farming together. The grain farm has expanded to 13 quarters.

Routledge Family, Lougheed 44

John Robert and Arthur Routledge were sons of a Yorkshire farmer. After working in London, the two men came to Canada in 1903 and 1904, respectively. They became known as the working Englishmen while they were employed at Cochrane's Bow River Horse Ranch, because their work ethic exceeded in comparison to the short-term hands and remittance men who were "exiled" to Canada. Both men were around 30 and single. In 1905, they each blind-filed their homesteads in the Lougheed area. When John didn't like his choice, he walked more than 90 miles in three days back to Wetaskiwin, in order to refile for another homestead. He also changed a plowshare that didn't fit the breaking plow they had bought. John's farm was a typical mixed operation that was always passed on to sons. Today, the mixed grain and cattle operation has expanded to 11-owned and four rented quarters. Grandson, John Raymond, son of William and Kathleen Routledge, continues the family-farming legacy.

Red Deer is officially incorporated as a city. **1913**

Sand Family, Rivercourse 45

At age 18, Emil Sand, his father and brother came to Saskatoon via train from Minnesota. They continued from Saskatoon via covered wagon towards Wetaskiwin where they planned on homesteading. However, along the way they were so attracted by the farmland along the Battle River that they chose a homestead between Chauvin and McLaughlin. Cattle have always been an important part of the Sand operation, which Emil passed down to his son, Lawrence, and Lawrence's wife, Julie. Today, Emil's grandson, Edwin, is running a mixed farm and a small backgrounding feedlot. The homestead still remains as the home base. Emil must have been proud of starting a new life in a new country. He saved the original homestead receipt and it has been passed down through the generations as a precious keepsake.

Sangster Family, Innisfree 46

Alexander Sangster travelled alone from Scotland to Canada as a teenager. He worked on farms in Ontario, as a brakeman for the railway and as a miner in British Columbia. He homesteaded in the Lake Alice District near Innisfree in 1905. Alexander helped anyone he could, hiring them as harvest help. He also put up many travellers for the night, as his home was a regular overnight stop of early settlers from the Rodino District. Alexander's daughter, Alice, and her husband, Clayton Broadhead, took over the farm. Today, Alice, her son, Garth, and his wife, Terri, farm two sections of land and run a herd of 75 cow/calves. Garth and Terri still live in the original farmhouse first built in 1914.

Savill Family, High Prairie 47

Sidney Savill Sr. was born in London, England, on November 20, 1881, and arrived in Canada in 1903. Once in northern Alberta, he took the wagon train from Athabasca to Grouard before finally settling in High Prairie. Despite all the hard work, Sidney still found the time to be an avid sports fan. His favourite pastime was listening to a boxing match or baseball game on the radio. He and his wife, Eva, raised 12 children together. Sidney passed away on his 85th birthday on November 20, 1966. His wife, Eva, predeceased him in February 1961. The homestead began as a mixed operation with Sidney's son, Donald, adding cattle after taking over the farm 1945. After Donald's passing in 2000, his son, Chris, took over, growing grain and hay crops.

Sawyer Family, Pine Lake 48

Hanna Sawyer and her children immigrated to Halifax from England by ship. They lived in Montreal for a few years before coming west to homestead in the Pine Lake area. It was unusual for a woman to take out a homestead on her own. Hanna established the family operation as a mixed farm. It included a commercial cattle herd, hogs, horses, chickens, dairy cows, and a grain and forage operation. Hanna passed the farm on to her son, Fred, who passed it on to his son, John. Hanna's great-grandson, Doug, now manages the farm as a ranch, and contracts horses to youth programs. Doug received the Premier's 4-H Award in 1984, the highest honour bestowed upon an Alberta 4-H member.

An article in the Edmonton Bulletin *on January 14, 1925, entitled Taking Stock of Alberta gives the population of Alberta in 1905 as 160,000 people. No source is provided for this estimate. The 1906 census reported the population of Alberta as 185,412 people.*

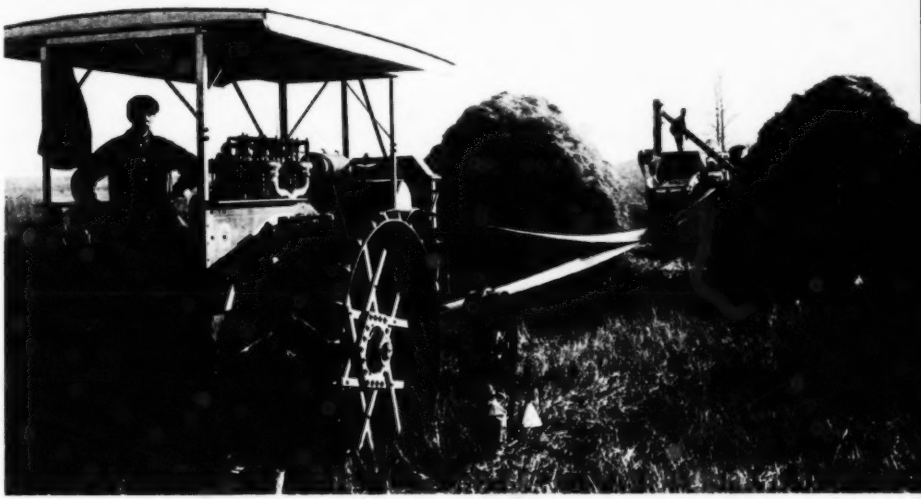


Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Threshing crews worked long hours to get the crops in.

Skoberg Family, Lougheed 49

John Erik Skoberg was 60 when he immigrated to Holmstown (now Lougheed) in March 1905. He had first come to the United States from Sweden. His homestead originated as a mixed farm. Although grain farming is now the farm's main activity, a commercial cattle operation continues to be an integral part of the business. The original homestead was passed to John's son, Albert, and then to his grandson, Mervin. The farm has grown from its original 160 acres to over 3,800 acres. Recently, a small flock of broiler chickens was added. The finished chickens are sold to town residents and neighbours. Great-grandson, Ken, and his wife, Birthe, continue to farm the original homestead. Their youngest son purchased some land and started a part-time farming venture in 2003.

Skocdopole Family, Botha 50

John Skocdopole was a farmer, businessmen, politician and community builder. He was a child when his family first immigrated to the United States from Czechoslovakia. John and his wife, Marie (who was also from Czechoslovakia) came to Canada by wagon from Oklahoma with their nine-month-old son. They settled southeast of the village of Botha in 1905. Together, John and Marie raised three boys and three girls on a mixed operation. Since John had an excellent education and could read and write, he found himself on many boards and committees. He was a charter member of the Botha Farmer's Elevator (which later became the Alberta Wheat Pool) and helped establish one of the first grain elevators in Botha. Their youngest son, Shorty, took over the operation. Two of Shorty's four sons still live and work on the original homestead. Their sons are also active in the day-to-day management of the farm, which features a modern feedlot.

Sommers Family, Champion 51

Peter Obed Sommers' descendants are "amazed at how the family managed to build the two storey farm house, stable, cow and chicken houses, dig two wells and put in two miles of fence, all while surviving a long cold winter," writes granddaughter Myrna Lawrence. At age 53, Peter came from Genesco, Illinois with his wife, Sarah, and four children. They took a homestead near Champion in 1905. At the same time, their oldest son, Delbert, who was 21, homesteaded his own quarter. Peter and Sarah raised livestock that were used primarily by the family, and grew red spring wheat, barley, oats and rye. Peter's farm passed down to his younger son, Orrie. Orrie also rented Delbert's land in the mid 1920s, and eventually bought three quarters from him. Orrie's son, Donald, ran the operation until his death in 1999. Myrna Lawrence is Orrie's last surviving child. With the love of the farm and their grandparents, Peter's great-granddaughters kept the original homestead quarter.

Stirton Family, Olds 52

Originally from Ontario, David Lincoln Stirton was young and single when he came to Alberta via Idaho. He bought CPR land and built the original house in 1906. David's great-grandson, Terry Stirton, still lives in the house today. The farm was a mixed operation, and included pigs, milk cows, grain and beef cattle. Today, the Stirton family runs a grain, hay and cattle operation. David's son, Vernand Stirton, married Grace Holmes. She is from a neighouring farm family that received its Century Farm Award in 1993. The Stirton farm is now owned and operated by David's grandson, David Lanning, and his family.

A family poses with their binder in front of the M. Seagarts farm house.

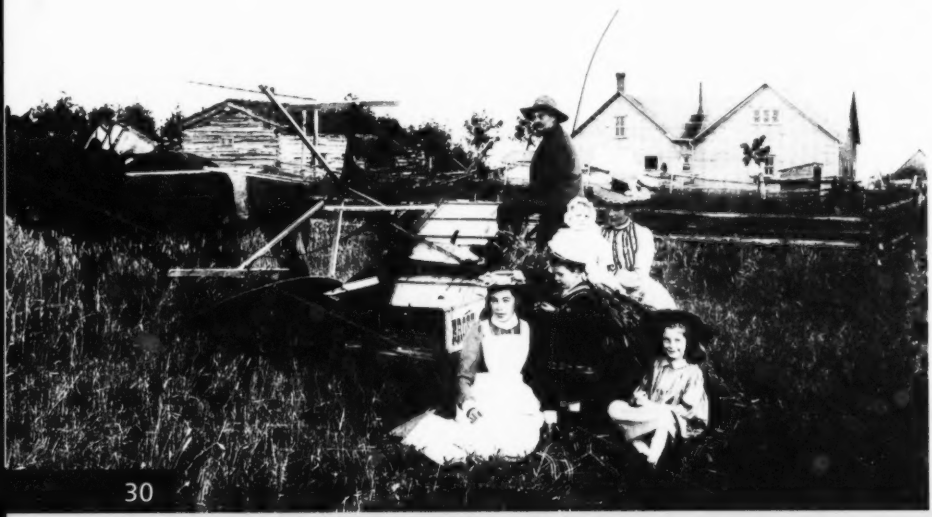


Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

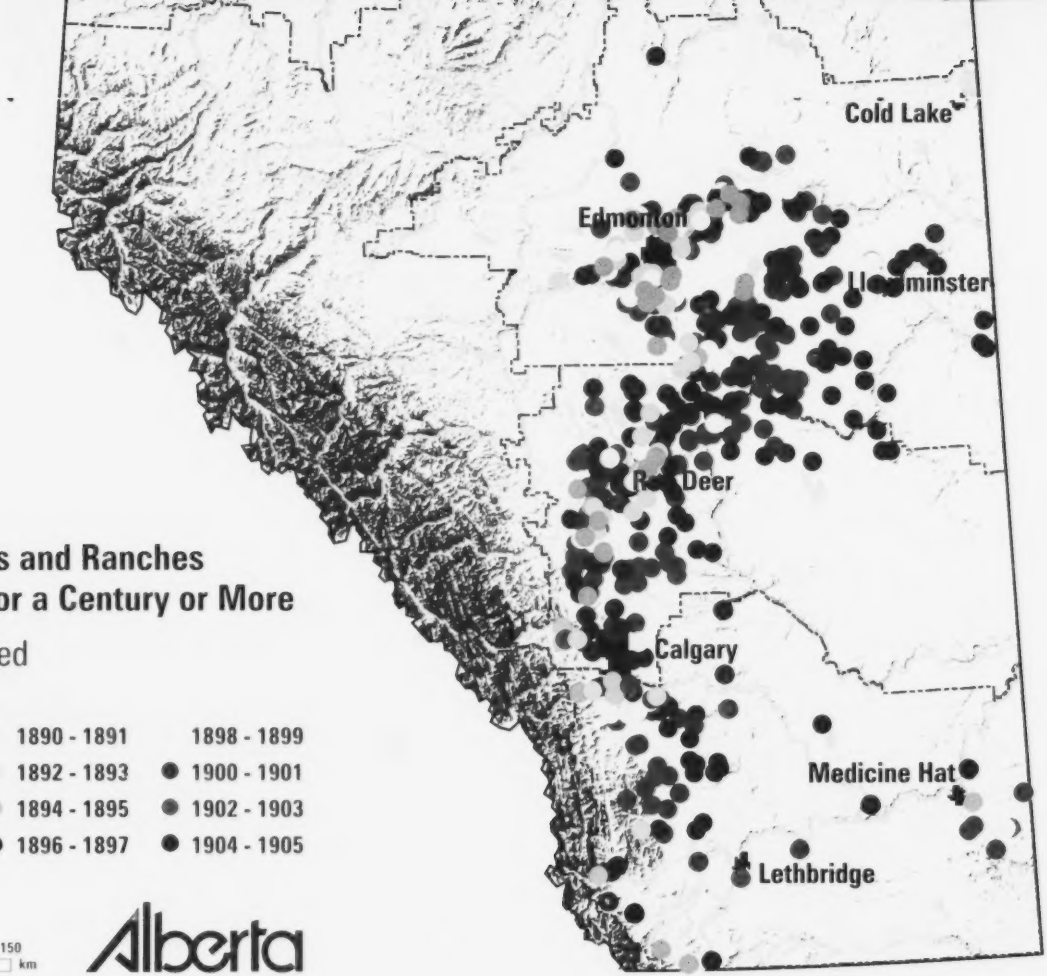
Tees Family, Clive 53

Wanting to homestead in a cooler climate, James Tees travelled north from Blencoe, Iowa, to Canada in 1901. James and his brother, William, and William's family, ranched together on a homestead until 1905, when James bought a quarter section for himself. James paid $10 dollars an acre for land located 1.5 miles northwest of Valley City, now known as Clive. He married Augusta Johnson the same year and together they raised cattle, hogs and sheep. James was also the brand reader in the area for many years. The family retains their brand, the Two T and Running Bar. James' son, James Johnson Tees, and his wife, Clara, went on to raise six children on the farm. In 1988, their youngest son, Philip, and his wife, Susan, bought the home quarter. The fourth generation of Tees, Matthew and Ronda, now operate a mixed cow-calf operation on a half-section northeast of Tees. The land was once part of the original James and William homestead.

Government laws, at the time, prevented single women from owning homesteading property, while the regulations practically gave away land to men. The only way a woman could obtain homestead land was if she was a widow with minor children. Western Canadian women finally won the right to homestead in the 1930s.

Thirsk Family, Wetaskiwin 54

In 1897, 39-year-old William Thirsk travelled to Alberta from Goderich, Ontario in search of land. He was so impressed with what he saw that he went back for his wife, Jenny, and two daughters. They returned by train to Alberta as a family in 1898. In 1905, William bought land near Wetaskiwin from the Hudson Bay Company. He raised purebred Shorthorn cattle and Clydesdale horses. William's oldest son, Stanley, took over the mixed farming operation. Stanley's son, Dennis, still operates it as a mixed farm, with cattle being the main source of income. In 1903, William was instrumental in helping to build the first school in the Angus Ridge district, even donating two acres of land for it. In 1927, the community bought one acre's worth of adjoining land to build a still-thriving community hall.



Alberta Farms and Ranches Established for a Century or More

Year Established

1882 - 1883	1890 - 1891	1898 - 1899
1884 - 1885	1892 - 1893	1900 - 1901
1886 - 1887	1894 - 1895	1902 - 1903
1888 - 1889	1896 - 1897	1904 - 1905

0 25 50 100 150 km

Alberta

Tovell Family, Vermilion 55

The Tovell family claimed six different homesteads in the Vermilion area between 1905 and 1907. In the years since then, all six have been continuously farmed by members of the Tovell family. Brothers Wilbert (Will) and James, both in their mid-twenties, came from Arthur, Ontario by train, first to Calgary, then to Edmonton and finally to Vermilion. They had originally planned to homestead near Innisfree, but the land near Vermilion was the last to be settled and was to their liking. Their parents, brother Morton, and two sisters came to Alberta in 1906. Will filed for his land on July 25, 1905, but returned to Ontario with his family in 1908. James filed for his land adjoining Wills on April 3, 1906, and stayed in Alberta. The land was passed on to James' son, Arthur, and is currently being farmed by his grandson, Lloyd, and his great-grandson, Steven Tovell. For many years the farm was a mixed operation, but today it is a zero-till grain farm.

1906 *The Provincial Legislative Assembly confirmed Edmonton as the Provincial Capital and the site for the future Provincial Legislature Building was selected near the North Saskatchewan River, above Fort Edmonton.*

Wagner Family, Duffield 56

Paul Wagner was much like any other immigrant of the time, looking for a better life for his family in a new land called Alberta. He tried his hand at whatever he could, from working as a lumberjack to panhandling gold in the Athabasca River. He left his wife and six children in Schmotteseiffen, Germany, to apply for his homestead in the Meewassin area, now known as Keephills. Eighteen months later, his family joined him from Germany at their new home, travelling the last leg of their journey on a lumber wagon from Edmonton. After Paul's death, his two sons took over the farm, and it eventually became the property of son Joseph, who passed away in 1957. Grandsons, Ken and Albert, are now the present-day operators of the 3,000-acre farm. They raise cattle and practice zero-tillage to grow a variety of crops, including beans, corn, canola and hay.

Farmland increased from 10.9 per cent of total land in 1911 to 32.6 per cent in 1991.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

There was a lot of work to be done at harvest time and everyone pitched in to help.

Walker Family, Trochu 57

George Walker came to Alberta by train from North Dakota at the age of 24. His wife, son and daughter arrived later in 1905. George grew mostly grain and raised Clydesdales as workhorses. He sold them to local farmers and customers from as far away as Montreal. He owned a threshing machine that served many neighbours. One year he hired a crew from Quebec for the September harvest. A wet month prevailed, but George ensured the crew had three square meals a day and a clean bed while they waited for the weather to clear. The crew's excursion rates expired in October and they returned to Quebec without completing the harvest. This was an example of what an employer would do in a labour shortage and uncertain weather conditions. The farm was passed down from George to his son, Lloyd, and now to his grandson, Kent. The farm has tripled in size and is now primarily a grain/forage operation.

Wallace Family, Brushy Ridge 58

In the summer of 1883, 20-year-old William Wallace first saw the West while working on the construction of the CPR at Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. Originally from Packenham in Lanark County, Ontario, William came west again in 1905 and bought land in Brushy Ridge. He came by rail with a carload of settler's effects. His wife and two sons came by train a couple months later. The family first lived on the quarter where the Springbank United Church now stands. The winter of 1906-07 was especially cold. After travelling two-and-a-half miles from Springbank to his land in Brushy Ridge to feed cattle, William's beard was a solid block of ice. Thanks to the dense willow brush on the property, the family's cattle survived that winter. Hundreds of other cattle died on the open range. A couple years later they moved to their land at Brushy Ridge. The framed farmhouse that was constructed in 1908, still stands today. The farm was passed down to son, William P., and then to grandson, William C., who now has a one-man cattle, hay and grain operation. The farm has been expanded to include another three quarters.

Warke Family, Pine Lake 59

Dr. Charles Lyle Warke came to Canada from Liverpool, England in 1905, at the age of 40. He, his wife Muriel, and three children, travelled to Alberta, first by boat and then by train. Charles became the local doctor at Pine Lake, doing surgery on his kitchen table with Muriel acting as his nurse. His two sons, Charles and Bill, drove their father around to his various medical calls via horse-and-buggy. Charles Sr. served in the Canadian Medical Corp during the Great War and as a ship's doctor in the late 1920s. He passed the farm to his wife, Muriel, to son, Charles, and then to his grandson, John, who continues to operate it today. The farm has expanded over the years, with cattle pasturing on the original quarter, and with a cattle and grain operation on the remaining land.

Withers Family, Lavoy 60

W.W. Withers came to the Lavoy area from Mosselle, North Dakota. He crossed the Canadian border by train on March 17, 1905, at the age of 32. His farm was mixed, with beef and dairy cows, hogs and grain. It evolved into primarily a beef and grain operation. The Withers family survived the Grand Trunk Fire, which was started about 20 miles south of the homestead. The fire burned everything in its path, all the way to the North Saskatchewan River, 60 miles north. The farm was passed down to son, Guy, and now to grandson, Norm Withers. It is now a seven-quarter beef and grain operation.

Wold Family, Alliance 61

John and Helen Wold homesteaded near Alliance, in the County of Flagstaff. In 1905, 37-year-old John travelled alone by train from his native Harvey, North Dakota to Daysland. From there he went by wagon to homestead at Alliance. His family joined him the following year, in 1906. The Wold operation has remained a viable grain operation. It has grown to six owned quarters, 12 rented quarters and two rented crown land pastures. The farm has been passed down from John and Helen to their son, Arthur (married to Margit), and finally on to their grandson, Robert (married to Darlene).

Alberta's economy at the start of its first century revolved around agriculture and coal. Today, it's an economic leader with a vibrant and diverse industrial base in advanced technology, agri-foods, energy, forestry projects, manufacturing, tourism and telecommunications.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Located in the Rosebud area, this was the DesJardines horse ranch in 1907

Zarusky Family, Smoky Lake 62

Stephen Zarusky instilled in his family the philosophy that honesty and hard work were needed in order to prosper. He and his wife, Palahia, immigrated to Halifax by ship from the western Ukraine. They travelled by train to Alberta, choosing to homestead six miles northwest of Smoky Lake. The mixed farming operation started with 320 acres, but grew to 960 acres when son, Mike, and his wife, Nellie, took over. Mike's son, Steve, and his wife, Carol, then expanded it to 1,600 acres. They also added a 100-sow farrow-to-finish hog operation and sold purebred Hampshire hogs. Now, great-grandson Michael has expanded it to 4,200 acres, with a 400-head cow-calf operation. Family involvement in both the community and church gave Steve the opportunity to get involved in politics. He was elected as the Progressive Conservative Member of the Alberta Legislature from 1986 to 1993. He represented the Redwater-Andrew constituency. His father, Mike, is still alive today at 94!

Editor's Note

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this booklet, the information has been gathered from many handwritten sources and rewritten to fit into a limited amount of space. We apologize for any errors, omissions or misunderstandings.

Sources

- Biographies from the 62 recipient families.
- Photos from the Provincial Archives of Alberta.
- *"Everything you always wanted to know about homestead records."* Keith Stotyn, Chief Archivist, Manuscripts and Reference Services, Provincial Archives of Alberta.
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- *"Harvesting the Flame"* by Fay Orr.
- *"Alberta's Political History"* by Heritage Community Foundation.
- *"Verse the Marquis"* http://www.albertacentennial.ca/history/viewpost.aspx?id=249

This threshing crew worker proudly shows off the results of his hard work.

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

This 1884 cowboy deals with a stubborn heifer.

Alberta Facts

1905 *Alberta officially became a Province on September 1, 1905; the first Premier was Honourable Alexander C. Rutherford.*

1905 *The provincial general election was held on November 9, 1905. Twenty-five MLAs were elected from across the province.*

1905 *The Department of Agriculture was established. The first minister was Honourable W.T. Finlay and the first deputy minister was George Harcourt.*

1906 *Lethbridge and Medicine Hat were officially incorporated as cities.*

1906 *Alberta Government Telephones was established. Alberta was the first province to convert party lines to individual service, starting in 1986.*

1908 *The University of Alberta was established; the Faculty of Agriculture was established in 1915 and the first Dean was Mr. E.A. House.*

1912 *In Edmonton, 1,500 people lined up for 36 hours for the Hudson's Bay Company land sale.*

1913 *Alberta Farmers Co-operative Elevator Company was formed; end of Alberta's building boom.*

1921 *During the 1921 Census, a farm was defined as a tract of one acre and over, which in 1920 produced crops of any kind to the value of $50 or more.*

1930 *The wild rose was chosen as the floral emblem of Alberta.*

Photo from the Provincial Archives of Alberta

This 1921 photo shows J. Bruce and his son in barley field.

The Marquis of Lorne named the District of Alberta. His inspiration for the name is found in a verse the Marquis dedicated to his wife.

"In token for the love which thou has Shown,
For this wild land of freedom, I have Named.
A Province vast, and for its beauty Famed,
By thy dear name to be hereafter Known.
Alberta shall it be!"

Published by:
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Agriculture Information Division

September 2005